I

In the beginning,

God created the heavens and the earth.

before kingdoms of men

before Men Pressured other Men to Obey them

before blood had cried from the ground

there was Heaven.

And the morning stars sang together,

and all the sons of God shouted for joy;

for the foundations of creation were laid

beneath the hand of the Almighty.

And behold—

light came forth at His word.

The darkness fled before Him.

The waters were divided at His command.

The heavens were stretched forth as a curtain,

and the earth arose beneath them,

clothed according to the pleasure of her Maker.

And the host of Heaven beheld these things

and wondered greatly.

Among that innumerable company

stood three brothers of Heaven.

GABRIEL

Chief Herald

among the messengers of the Most High.

His joy was in the Word of his King;

for whensoever the voice of the LORD went forth,

he inclined his ear unto Him

as one who hearkeneth unto a song.

And he waited upon the pleasure of God, saying within himself,

"Whither wilt Thou send me?"

"What word shall I bear?"

"Unto whom shall Thy voice be carried?"

in declaring that which proceedeth

from the mouth of the Most High GOD

And beside him stood

MICHAEL

And Michael wept.

Yet behold, his tears were not tears of sorrow;

They were tears of wonder.

For he beheld the stars awaken in their courses.

He beheld the light itself come forth

at the mere utterance of God.

And the tears ran freely down his countenance.

MICHAEL

"Brother…

behold."

Gabriel smiled upon him.

GABRIEL

"I behold it."

But Michael shook his head,

and laughter mingled with his tears.

And even whilst he spoke,

another star kindled in the firmament.

Michael lifted up his face.

MICHAEL

"He speaketh…

and it obeyeth Him.

O Gabriel!

He calleth forth that which was not,

and behold—

it is!

My O my

How marvelous

Blessed be to the Lord!"

And Gabriel answered him,

GABRIEL

"Indeed, Michael,

such is our King.

How wondrous is His hand!

He putteth forth but a finger unto the darkness,

and behold—

stars beyond number awaken at His touch.

Creatures whose names have never passed mine ear,

worlds whereon mine eyes have never rested,

and realms stretched forth beyond all measure!

What marvels hath the LORD yet hidden from us?

What mysteries keepeth He beneath His sleeve,

that neither thou nor I have dreamed thereof?

For scarcely do I behold one wonder

ere He bringeth forth another.

Brother—

I begin to think eternity itself

shall not suffice us

to behold all that our King

hath yet to reveal."

MICHAEL

"My LORD…

I am in love…..

Surely shall I serve Thee whilst the heavens endure;

til death itself

should dare part me from Thee."

A voice came from behind him.

LUCIFER

"Until what part thee?"

Michael turned.

And behold, Lucifer stood before them.

The Chief Duke of The Heavens

The Army of God he hath commanded

He drew nigh,

his countenance stern,

though not without affection.

LUCIFER

"What strange thing hast thou uttered, brother?

What is this death

Whereof thou speakest so freely?

Take heed lest thy tongue devise such a dreadful thing

and bring the displeasure of Heaven upon us all."

Michael opened his mouth to answer—

but Gabriel stepped betwixt them, smiling.

GABRIEL

"Surely, Lucifer,

he meaneth no dishonour.

Not against the LORD.

Our brother's heart hath merely outrun his tongue."

Gabriel looked toward Michael.

Then toward the newborn stars.

A mischievous light entered his countenance.

GABRIEL

"Though I confess

it would be a most silly thing indeed

to jump after darkness,

now that Light hath been spoken upon us

this glorious day.

Why would you?”

Michael laughed.

So did Lucifer

The sternness departed from his face,

and the mighty Duke grinned.

LUCIFER

“Indeed it would.”

He looked into the great deep beneath them.

Then back unto his brethren.

LUCIFER

“For what fool,

having once beheld the Light,

would forsake it willingly

and walk himself into the pit?”

Gabriel smiled.

Michael laughed.

And Then,

Lucifer laughed with them.

None perceived the shadow

hidden beneath words.

And another day began in Heaven.

And the voice of the LORD went forth;

and the hosts ceased from their speech,

The King Hath Spoken

GOD

"Let us make man in our image,

after our likeness:

and let them have dominion."

And the heavenly host gasped.

they looked one upon another in wonder,

for never before had such a word proceedeth

from the mouth of the Most High

concerning a creature

a mortal

Our image.

Our likeness.

And behold

the LORD God stooped unto the earth.

Not unto the firmament.

Not unto the stars which burned in their courses.

Not unto the treasures of Heaven,

nor unto the splendour of the heavenly host.

But unto the ***dust****.*

And the angels wondered.

For the LORD gathered unto Himself

the dust of the ground,

and from that which was beneath their feet

He fashioned a creature.

Michael looked upon it.

Gabriel looked upon it.

And Lucifer also looked.

It possessed no wings.

No splendour adorned its countenance.

No heavenly fire proceedeth from its body.

Its flesh was tender.

Its strength was little.

Its feet were bound unto the earth

from whence it had been taken.

Dust.

And for a moment,

the creature lay still before its Maker.

Then the LORD God drew nigh unto him.

And God breathed into his nostrils

the breath of life.

And behold—

the dust ***breathed.***

His breast arose.

His fingers moved.

His eyes opened unto the light.

And man became a ***living soul.***

Adam.

He opened his eyes

and looked upon his Maker.

And all Heaven

*looked upon **him**.*

For a moment there was silence.

Then—

joy broke forth among the host

as waters breaking from a mighty fountain.

The sons of God clapped their hands.

Their voices arose together.

The heavens rang with their rejoicing.

SERAPHIM

"Glory unto the LORD!"

"Blessed be the Most High!"

"Behold the workmanship of our King!

For his works knoweth no limit

Strength Beyond Measure”

And their rejoicing continued,

for the dust had lived,

and the breath of God was within him.

Michael smiled greatly.

Gabriel bowed his head,

marvelling at yet another mystery

which his King had kept hidden from him.

But Lucifer—

said nothing.

His arms folded behind his back

his chest stood puffed

He looked down upon the earth

sternness covered his face

Joy covered the Host

His brethren rejoiced around him.

But the Chief Duke stood still.

His eyes remained upon Adam.

Longer than the others.

And confusion entered into his countenance.

He looked upon the man.

Then upon God.

Then again upon the man.

Lucifer’s eyes narrowed.

The rejoicing of Heaven continued around him,

yet it seemed now distant unto his ears.

He looked upon Adam,

and whispered unto himself—

LUCIFER

"Why?"

……

"Why…

him?"

II

Now after the LORD had finished the earth,

and had established the works of His hands,

the Angelic Host were gathered together

before their King.

And the heavens were settled.

The stars kept their appointed courses;

the firmament declared the workmanship of GOD;

and the earth beneath them flourished

according unto His Love.

Then the Angel Hosts assembled

unto a great Academy,

a house ordained beneath the authority of the King,

wherein the sons of Heaven

might be instructed in wisdom,

in judgment,

in righteousness,

and in the ancient philosophy of Justice.

For the Academy was not a house of ambition.

Neither came the angels thither
that one might exalt himself above another,

nor that the mighty might boast of his strength,

nor the learned glory in his understanding.

God forbid.

For such vanities were yet strange unto Heaven.

Nay—

they came that they might know GOD,

that they might understand His ways,

and that whatsoever authority
was committed unto their hands

might ever remain a servant unto righteousness.

And the Spirit of GOD was their teacher;

His wisdom was their doctrine;

His righteousness their measure;

and His love, the end of all their learning.

And over the Academy stood

YEHOSHUA

Grand Headmaster,

the Chief Commander of the Hosts,

the Prince of Peace,

the Word of the Living GOD.

And beneath Him were appointed

Dukes and Barons,

Earls and Captains,

masters of wisdom

and Leaders of every Host,

each according unto the charge

which had been committed unto him.

And the teachings of the Academy

were ordered according unto two great disciplines:

JUDGMENT.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

For whosoever would bear the authority of Heaven

must first understand Judgment:

to discern a matter rightly,

to know the innocent from the guilty,

the just from the unjust,

and every creature according unto its cause.

And he must understand Righteousness:

to lead the nature of good,

the purpose of justice,

and wherefore the mighty themselves

must bow before that which is right.

whereby righteousness

was carried forth;

the ordering of Hosts,

the keeping of peace,

the restraint of strength,

and the ancient art of war against Darkness.

The ***Wisdom of Judgment***

were committed unto divers Barons and Earls,

masters greatly esteemed amongst their brethren,

whose names are not remembered among men.

But the ***Mysteries of Righteousness***

the deepest philosophy of Justice

was entrusted unto one

greatly honoured amongst the Host.

LUCIFER.

Chief Duke of Heaven.

Commander among the Legions.

Head Professor beneath Yehoshua.

And it came to pass,

when the ordering of the Academy was accomplished,

that the LORD appointed a feast

within the Grand Hall thereof,

that the Hosts might rejoice together

in the works of their King.

And the doors of the Great Hall were opened.

And behold—

a multitude entered therein.

Dukes and Barons,

Earls and Captains,

teachers and heralds,

young hosts newly appointed unto their houses,

and companies beyond number

filled the courts thereof.

Long tables stretched beneath lofty pillars.

Bread was set before them,

and fruits pleasant unto the sight;

and whatsoever good thing the LORD had appointed

for the rejoicing of His household

was given freely unto them.

Banners descended from the heights of the Hall,

each bearing the signs

of the Houses of the Academy.

And there was music.

There was laughter.

There was much speaking amongst brethren.

For the LORD had not gathered His children

unto a house of cold discipline,

but had given unto them a place

where his love hath been revealed unto his children

And amongst the multitude stood Michael.

He was young amongst his brethren,

and his station was yet little.

No great title rested upon his name.

No legion answered unto his command.

No herald proclaimed his deeds.

Yet his eyes wandered everywhere.

Unto the banners.

Unto the commanders.

Unto the mighty Hosts seated according to their Houses.

And above all,

unto the place of the King.

And Michael's heart burned within him.

he desired greatly

that his King might one day have need of him.

And Michael whispered within himself,

MICHAEL

"May you call me, my LORD…..

Whatsoever Thou wouldest have of me—

send me O God."

Then suddenly

a trumpet sounded.

The voices of the Hall diminished.

Another trumpet answered it.

And from the high place

there came forth a familiar messenger.

Gabriel

Chief Herald amongst the messengers

of the Most High.

He stood before the assembled Host,

and a great smile was upon his countenance.

GABRIEL

"My brethren!

Sons of the Kingdom!

Ye servants of the Living GOD!

Welcome!"

And the Hall answered him

with a mighty rejoicing.

Gabriel laughed.

GABRIEL

"I perceive ye have found the tables already."

Laughter moved throughout the Hall.

GABRIEL

"Rejoice!

For behold what our King hath wrought!"

And Gabriel stretched forth his hand

toward the great windows of the Hall.

Beyond them lay the heavens,

and far beneath,

the newborn earth.

Blue waters covered the deep.

Clouds moved over the face thereof.

Mountains stood in their places,

and living things multiplied

according unto the word of GOD.

GABRIEL

"Behold the world!"

"Another workmanship of our King!

Another mystery brought forth

from His wisdom!

Another realm wherein His goodness

shall be known!"

And the Hall thundered,

HOSTS

"GLORY UNTO GOD!"

"GLORY UNTO THE MOST HIGH!"

"BLESSED BE THE KING!"

Gabriel waited until their voices had settled.

Then he lifted forth a great scroll.

GABRIEL

"And now—

unto the ordering of the Academy

I shall call thy name;

and when thou hearest

arise from thy place,

come forth from amongst thy brethren,

and stand beside the podium,

that every Host may know

the charge appointed unto thee."

A murmur of expectation

passed throughout the Hall.

Some straightened themselves in their seats.

Others looked upon their brethren,

wondering whose name should first be called.

Michael sat upright.

Gabriel looked upon the scroll.

GABRIEL

"Michael."

Michael froze.

His eyes widened.

Gabriel looked up.

GABRIEL

"Michael?"

Murmurs arose from the table beside him.

One of his brethren struck him lightly

upon the shoulder.

ANGEL

"Thy name hath been called, brother."

MICHAEL

"Oi!"

Michael sprang from his place.

He hastened through the Hall,

then remembered himself

and slowed his steps.

Gabriel watched him approach, smiling.

Michael came before the podium

and bowed deeply before the King.

His heart beat mightily within him.

Michael could scarcely contain his joy.

Then he took his appointed place.

Gabriel looked again upon the scroll.

Then another name was called.

And another.

And another.

Throughout the Hall

the Hosts arose according unto their appointment.

Captains came forth.

Heralds came forth.

Teachers stood beside teachers.

Barons joined their Houses.

Earls took their places amongst their companies.

And the great order of Heaven

was established before them.

None contended for another’s station.

None murmured,

“Wherefore hath he received more than I?”

For each rejoiced in the portion

committed unto thy hand,

and the honour of one brother

became the gladness of another.

At length,

the scroll drew near unto its end.

Gabriel looked upon the final name.

Then he became still.

The Hall perceived it.

The voices diminished.

Gabriel lifted his countenance.

GABRIEL

"And now,

there remaineth one.".

"One who hath walked amongst the Hosts

from ancient days.

One mighty in wisdom.

Perfect in beauty.

Chosen amongst the Legions.

A teacher amongst teachers,

and a commander amongst commanders."

Michael smiled.

He knew.

Many within the Hall knew.

Gabriel raised his voice.

GABRIEL

"Lucifer.

Come forth.”

And Lucifer arose.

At once,

the Hall broke into rejoicing.

The Hosts stood.

Michael clapped his hands

and called unto his brother.

Captains bowed their heads.

Barons saluted him.

The Legions thundered their approval.

And Lucifer walked through their midst.

He came unto the podium.

Gabriel looked upon him.

Then unto the multitude.

GABRIEL

“Before the King,

and before the innumerable company of Heaven,

let it be known:

Lucifer hath been appointed

CHIEF DUKE OF HEAVEN,

Head Professor beneath Yehoshua,

and Chief Commander

over all the Angelic Army.”

And the Hall shook

with the rejoicing of the Hosts.

Then came forth the ministers of the court,

bearing the covering appointed unto his office.

And they arrayed Lucifer therein.

Stone after stone adorned him;

sardius,

topaz,

diamond,

beryl,

onyx,

jasper,

sapphire,

emerald,

and carbuncle.

And when the covering had been placed upon him,

Lucifer stood beneath the heights of the Hall,

clothed in splendour.

For a moment,

he said nothing.

He merely listened.

The Hosts rejoiced.

The Legions called his name.

Michael clapped amongst his brethren.

Then Lucifer—

grinned.

Quietly.

His eyes moved across the multitude.

Then slowly,

he raised both his hands.

The Hall grew louder.

Lucifer closed his eyes.

And for one lingering moment,

he suffered the praise to wash over him.

Gabriel watched.

His smile weakened.

At length Lucifer opened his eyes

and motioned for silence.

The multitude obeyed.

Gabriel turned toward him.

This had not been commanded.

Indeed,

no speech had been appointed unto Lucifer.

Yet before Gabriel could resume the ceremony,

Lucifer stepped before him.

He laid one hand gently upon Gabriel's shoulder.

LUCIFER

"Brother—

permit me."

Gabriel looked upon him strangely.

LUCIFER

"Only a word."

And before Gabriel could answer,

Lucifer turned unto the Hosts.

His voice filled the Hall.

LUCIFER

"My brethren!"

The Hosts answered with rejoicing.

Lucifer smiled greatly.

LUCIFER

"What glory is this

wherein we stand?"

He stretched forth his arms.

LUCIFER

"What kingdom hath ever been

like unto the Kingdom of our GOD?

What throne may be compared unto His throne?

What wisdom unto His wisdom?

What majesty unto His majesty?"

The Hosts cried aloud,

"NONE!"

Lucifer laughed.

LUCIFER

"None indeed!"

He began to walk before them,

his covering glittering beneath the light.

LUCIFER

"For behold what our King hath wrought!

He hath stretched forth the heavens.

He hath commanded the stars.

He hath established His Hosts in their courses,

and unto every servant
hath He committed a portion of His glory."

Gabriel's eyes lifted.

A portion of His glory.

Lucifer continued.

LUCIFER

"And what greater honour may a servant possess

than that his King should behold him

and judge him worthy

to bear so great a charge?”

The Hall answered with applause.

Lucifer placed his hand upon his breast.

LUCIFER

“I stand before you this day

not by mine own hand—

but because He hath seen me.

Therefore, I shall not disappoint”

Michael smiled proudly.

Lucifer raised his voice.

LUCIFER

“If our King desireth wisdom—

He shall find it amongst us!

If He desireth strength—

He shall behold it amongst us!

If He desireth an army worthy of Heaven—

then, my brethren,

WE SHALL GIVE HIM ONE!”

The Legions thundered.

Lucifer lifted his hands higher.

Gabriel’s countenance changed.

Only slightly.

For the words were fair.

The name of GOD was upon Lucifer’s tongue.

Every sentence appeared clothed in devotion.

And yet—

some strange thing had entered the speech.

But Gabriel

could not name it.

For it was a bitter taste

At last Lucifer turned toward the throne.

He bowed magnificently.

LUCIFER

"Unto Thee, my King,

be all glory."

Then he arose.

And smiled upon the multitude

as though some portion thereof

had fallen also

upon him.

III

Enter several ANGELS of the HOST, walking together beneath the great pillars of the Academy. Some bear scrolls; others have laid aside their instruments of war. There is unusual merriment among them.

Enter GABRIEL.

GABRIEL

How now?

What stir is this among the courts?

Why stand ye here, when every several Host

Hath been appointed to his exercise?

Speak. What order art thou?

FIRST ANGEL

Of the Third Company, my lord.

GABRIEL

And thou?

SECOND ANGEL

A keeper of the eastern gate.

GABRIEL

Then wherefore keepest thou it not?

SECOND ANGEL

The watch hath changed, my lord.

GABRIEL

Thy tongue is nimble when thy feet are not.

What celebration draweth all of Heaven

From duty unto gazing?

THIRD ANGEL

Knowest thou not?

Lucifer returneth from the outer courts.

GABRIEL

Lucifer?

FIRST ANGEL

Yes, my lord.

The Hosts which trained beneath his hand

Have overcome every trial set before them.

SECOND ANGEL

Not one formation brake.

THIRD ANGEL

Nor one command miscarried.

FIRST ANGEL

They say the Prince himself shall honour him

Before the gathered Academy.

GABRIEL

They say?

Who are they that know the Prince's counsel

Before the Prince hath spoken it?

SECOND ANGEL

Nay, my lord, 'tis but a rumour.

GABRIEL

Then let it die a rumour.

The word of Heaven descendeth from the throne;

It groweth not like weeds between men's tongues.

The Angels grow quiet.

THIRD ANGEL

We meant no wrong.

GABRIEL

I charge you not with wrong.

Yet mark me well:

There is a strange disease in admiration.

A servant may be honoured for his service;

Yet honour, fed beyond its proper measure,

Forgetteth soon the hand from whence it came.

Trumpets are heard afar off.

The Angels turn eagerly.

FIRST ANGEL

He cometh!

More ANGELS enter.

ANGELS

Lucifer!

Lucifer cometh!

GABRIEL

Peace.

Why shout ye thus?

Hath Lucifer created Heaven?

SECOND ANGEL

Nay, my lord.

GABRIEL

Hath he established the stars?

SECOND ANGEL

Nay.

GABRIEL

Hath he breathed being into any one of you?

THIRD ANGEL

No, my lord.

GABRIEL

Then temper joy with understanding.

Praise ye the servant, if his service prosper;

But let not praise, which belongeth to the King,

Become a crown upon another's head.

Enter MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

Brother Gabriel!

Why troublest thou their gladness?

GABRIEL

I trouble nothing that is rightly ordered.

MICHAEL

Then thou hast found disorder where I see

Only the Host rejoicing in its brother.

Lucifer hath laboured greatly.

Shall Heaven become so poor in charity

That excellence must hide itself for shame?

GABRIEL

I said not so.

MICHAEL

Thy countenance hath said enough.

Michael turns toward the Angels.

Rejoice.

If one among us prosper in his charge,

The whole Host prospereth with him.

ANGELS

Well spoken, Michael!

GABRIEL

And if one among us learn to love the sound

Of his own name above the name he serveth?

Silence.

MICHAEL

A grave accusation.

GABRIEL

I accused him not.

MICHAEL

Then speak not like an accuser.

GABRIEL

I speak as one who watcheth.

MICHAEL

Watch darkness, then.

Lucifer is thy brother.

GABRIEL

Therefore I watch the nearer.

A great sound of trumpets.

Enter LUCIFER with several captains of the ANGELIC HOST.

The gathering erupts.

HOST

Lucifer! Lucifer!

Hail unto the Morning Star!

Hail unto the Prince of Splendour!

Lucifer raises one hand.

The multitude falls gradually silent.

LUCIFER

My brethren—

Why spend such honour upon me?

Whatever strength ye have beheld this day

Was lent unto my hand by Him above.

If wisdom hath proceeded from my mouth,

The fountain is not mine.

If victory followed where I led,

The glory resteth with the King.

HOST

Glory unto the King!

LUCIFER

Ay.

Glory unto the King.

He smiles.

And blessed be the servant

whom the King accounteth worthy

to bear so great a portion of His glory.

GABRIEL

[Aside.]

He bade them cease—

and yet rejoiceth that they do not.

Lucifer's eyes meet Gabriel's.

The two behold one another across the court.

Lucifer inclines his head pleasantly.

Gabriel does not return the gesture.

LUCIFER

Come, brethren.

The day is young.

There remaineth much to learn

of war, of order—

and of greatness.

Lucifer exits with the Host following him.

Michael begins to follow.

Gabriel remains.

MICHAEL

Wilt thou not come?

GABRIEL

Presently.

MICHAEL

Thou art troubled by shadows.

GABRIEL

Perhaps.

Yet a shadow requireth something

to stand before the light.

MICHAEL

And what standeth there?

Gabriel watches Lucifer disappear into the Academy.

GABRIEL

I know not yet.

[.....]

IV

The Hall of Instruction.

Several ANGELS sit in ordered ranks. Scrolls lie before them.

Upon the walls hang instruments of war.

MICHAEL sitteth among them.

Enter LUCIFER.

LUCIFER

Be seated.

They sit.

This day we speak of righteousness.

Tell me—

what is righteousness?

FIRST ANGEL

To do that which is good.

LUCIFER

A child's answer.

Yet not a false one.

And what is evil?

SECOND ANGEL

That which opposeth the will of God.

LUCIFER

Better.

And what then shall righteousness do

when evil standeth before it?

THIRD ANGEL

Resist it.

LUCIFER

Only resist?

Suppose darkness entereth a kingdom.

Suppose it corrupteth the innocent,

mocketh judgment,

and lifteth itself against the King.

Shall righteousness merely stand before it

and say—

Lucifer mockingly raises his hand.

"Go no further"?

Some of the Angels laugh.

Nay.

Righteousness hath teeth.

There is a time for mercy.

There is also a time

when the sword must answer.

Lucifer draweth a training sword.

If darkness will not depart—

LUCIFER

destroy it.

He strikes a wooden figure from the table. It falls.

The Angels watch.

LUCIFER

And when the enemy falleth—

He looks down upon it.

—let him know that he hath fallen.

Lucifer smiles.

MICHAEL

My lord, Lucifer.

LUCIFER

Michael.

MICHAEL

If the enemy be fallen,

wherefore delight over him?

LUCIFER

Delight?

MICHAEL

Thou smiledst.

A brief silence.

The Angels stared at Michael

LUCIFER

And should righteousness mourn

when wickedness is brought low?

MICHAEL

For wickedness? Nay.

But for him whom wickedness hath ruined—

yes.

The righteous may rejoice that evil endeth,

yet take no pleasure in the suffering

of him that chose it.

The room grows still.

LUCIFER

Thou wouldst pity an enemy?

MICHAEL

I would pity what he hath become.

Lucifer beholdeth him for a moment.

LUCIFER

Very well.

Very well indeed.

He smiles.

Thou must be wiser than the Duke.

Some among the class laugh.

Michael does not.

LUCIFER

Stand up, Michael.

Michael rises.

Come.

Since thou hast found fault with my judgment,

let us make trial of thine.|

Lucifer takes up the sword and offereth it unto him.

LUCIFER

Here standeth thine enemy.

He hath despised the King,

oppressed the innocent,

and refuseth every command to yield.

What wilt thou do?

MICHAEL

Strike him down.

LUCIFER

Without pity?

MICHAEL

With pity.

LUCIFER

And what profiteth him thy pity

when thy sword is in his breast?

MICHAEL

Nothing.

LUCIFER

Then wherefore keep it?

MICHAEL

For myself.

Silence.

Lucifer's smile fades.

MICHAEL

Lest in destroying the works of darkness,

I learn to love them.

Lucifer stares at him.

Then suddenly he smiles again.

LUCIFER

Now sit down, Michael.

Michael sits.

LUCIFER

A most excellent answer.

Perhaps one day

thou shalt teach the lesson.

The Angels laugh.

LUCIFER

Gather together, Come.

There is something I would like to show you

The great doors of the DIVINE COUNCIL HOUSE were opened.

Lucifer leadeth the Angels through.

And they entered beneath a mighty dome.

At the crown thereof was a great Oculus, opened unto the heavens, and light descended through it into the midst of the Court.

Round about the chamber rose the seats of the Council, rank above rank, in a great circle; the lesser seats below, and the greater exalted above them, according unto their office.

And at the highest place stood the Throne.

Heavenly beings sat in their appointed places.

The students gazed upward in wonder.

LUCIFER

Behold the DIVINE COUNCIL.

Where Righteousness discussed

Here are matters weighed
which concern kingdoms, nations,
judgments, and the ordering of creation.

Here stand the sons of God.

Here are the holy ones.

Here the Watchers attend their charge.

And above every seat—

He pointeth toward the highest place.

—the Throne.

All bow their heads.

Lucifer boweth last.

Michael looketh upon him.

Lucifer turneth toward the Council.

LUCIFER

My lord

I crave the Court for but a little while.

There remaineth one lesson
which cannot well be taught from without.

The Council look one upon another.

Lucifer ascendeth toward YEHOSHUA.

He boweth.

Then draweth near unto Him

and speaketh softly into His ear.

LUCIFER

Besides—

Your Highness hath greater matters

than these poor lessons of mine.

Hast Thou not stretched forth the heavens

and fashioned worlds beneath Thy hand?

The earth awaiteth Thee.

Adam, whom Thou hast formed of dust,

yet walketh young beneath the sun.

Kingdoms shall rise.

Nations shall come.

surely, their ordering requireth

the eye of their Maker.

Lucifer draweth nearer, lowering his voice almost pleasantly.

Why then should the King of worlds

trouble Himself with the lesson

of a schoolmaster?

Lucifer smiles.

LUCIFER

May you leave these little matters unto me,

Your Highness.

I shall keep them well.

YEHOSHUA looketh upon him.

He saith nothing.

A long silence.

Then Yehoshua riseth.

At once the whole Council riseth with Him.

LUCIFER

My King.

Lucifer boweth and draweth aside.

Yehoshua passeth before him.

Lucifer remaineth bowed.

Only when the King hath passed doth Lucifer raise his head.

YEHOSHUA passeth him without a word.

The members of the Council descend from their seats and depart after the King.

MICHAEL watches.

The great doors begin to close.

Lucifer remaineth standing in the midst of the chamber.

The doors shut.

Silence.

Lucifer turns toward the class.

For the first time,

the Throne standeth before them—

empty.

Lucifer looketh upon it.

Then upon his students.

LUCIFER

Now—

we may speak freely.

[Elsewhere, beyond the Court.]

YEHOSHUA stoppeth.

GABRIEL standeth nearby.

Yehoshua turneth His eyes toward the doors through which He hath come.

Then unto Gabriel.

No word is spoken.

Gabriel understands.

He boweth.

GABRIEL

Yes, Your Majesty.

Gabriel departeth.

Within the Council House, Lucifer continueth his lesson,

knowing not that Gabriel hath been sent to observe him.

V

The DIVINE COUNCIL HOUSE.

The great Court remaineth empty.

The ANGELS stand together beneath the Throne.

LUCIFER walketh before them.

LUCIFER

Come, gather yourselves

before the Judgment Circle.

The students move toward the midst of the Court.

LUCIFER

This day we shall have a debate.

Fear not—

it is merely pretend.

Some of the Angels smile. Excited

LUCIFER

If ye are to understand righteousness,

ye must understand judgment;

and if ye would understand judgment,

ye must learn what it is

to weigh a matter for yourselves.

Therefore we shall make ourselves

a little Council.

He pointeth amongst them.

LUCIFER

Thou shalt accuse.

Thou shalt make defence.

Ye three shall bear witness.

And the rest shall hear the matter

and give counsel.

Go now.

Set yourselves in order.

The Angels begin arranging themselves about the Judgment Circle.

Some take the lower seats.

Others gather their scrolls.

There is quiet laughter amongst them as they prepare.

ANGEL

And who shall be King?

Lucifer stops.

He turns, with a slight grin

LUCIFER

Ah.

Someone must judge the matter.

He looks toward the Throne.

A brief silence.

LUCIFER

Very well.

I shall pretend to be King.

The students continue their preparations.

Lucifer ascendeth the steps.

One.

Then another.

Then another.

The voices of the students grew farther beneath him.

Still he ascendeth the stairs

At last Lucifer cometh before the Throne of YEHOSHUA.

He looketh upon it.

For a moment he doth not move.

Then he turneth—

and sitteth.

Lucifer becomes still.

At once, the whole Court seemeth to fall beneath him.

The Judgment Circle lay far below.

The seats of princes descended rank beneath rank.

And the Angels who had seemed mighty upon the floor now appeared small before his eyes.

Then came the weight.

Lucifer drew breath.

Fire entered his lungs.

His breast tightened beneath a glory that belonged not unto him.

His hands gripped the arms of the Throne.

For this was no common seat.

The place of the Most High GOD.

Authority seemed to press upon him from every side—

terrible,

beautiful,

and heavy beyond measure.

For no mortal could bear the glory of the Most High as though it were his own and remain unchanged.

Lucifer should have risen from the seat immediately

He knew it.

Yet he remained.

Another breath.

Another burning.

And slowly—

It settled

Corruption hath begun

Lucifer smiled.

For the weight which ought to have humbled him

made him feel powerful.

He looked down again upon the Angels beneath him.

His pain became pleasure.

His trembling became delight.

And though corruption had begun its quiet work within him,

Lucifer would not rise.

He leaned farther back into the seat of the Throne.

LUCIFER

(under his breath)

My, oh my...

His eyes wandered across the Court.

LUCIFER

How wonderful.

Lucifer forgetteth that he is pretending.

At the uttermost edge of the great doors,

GABRIEL stood.

Hidden beyond the sight of the students.

He had seen all.

Lucifer upon the Throne.

Lucifer leaning back.

Lucifer smiling.

Gabriel's countenance changed.

Then he saw his eyes.

The pupils thereof had narrowed—

sharp as daggers.

And within them burned a colour like unto fire.

The eyes of a dragon.

Gabriel gasped.

His hand rose over his mouth.

For among all the offences an Angel might dare commit,

This was among the greatest.

The Throne was forbidden.

No prince sat there.

No Watcher.

No son of God.

No Angel, however, exalted his office.

That Seat was set apart for the MOST HIGH GOD.

And Lucifer—

sat upon it.

Gabriel's shock became anger.

GABRIEL

(under his breath)

How dare he...

He looketh again.

Lucifer remained upon the Throne.

Smiling.

GABRIEL

Thou fool.

His anger faltered.

Grief entered in.

Gabriel's eyes began to fill.

GABRIEL

After all that we have seen...

He could scarcely finish.

He looked upon Lucifer for one final moment.

Not as a Watcher.

Not as a messenger sent to observe.

But as one Angel looking upon another

whom he had known from the beginning.

GABRIEL

(softly)

Thou hast forced my hand, Lucifer.

A tear descended upon his cheek.

GABRIEL

My Lucifer...

Gabriel bowed his head.

Then vanished.

And Lucifer knew not

that judgment was already on its way.

VI

Lucifer remaineth upon the Throne.

Below him the students have taken their places about the Judgment Circle.

He looketh down upon them.

His eyes settle upon MICHAEL.

LUCIFER

Michael.

Michael looks upward.

LUCIFER

Come forth.

Michael entereth the midst of the Circle.

LUCIFER

Thou shalt be my witness.

MICHAEL

Concerning what matter, my lord?

Lucifer leaneth upon the Throne.

LUCIFER

Righteousness. Of Course, What else

Michael waits.

LUCIFER

More particularly—

the righteousness of the Lord

over Heaven.

The students become quiet.

Michael looks upward.

MICHAEL

What is there to debate?

Our Lord is Lord

LUCIFER

Excellent.

Lucifer smiles.

LUCIFER

Then thou shouldst have little trouble defending it.

Some Angels laugh.

Michael does not.

LUCIFER

Tell me, Michael—

is God righteous?

MICHAEL

Thou askest whether fire be warm,

or whether light be bright.

The LORD is righteous,

and righteousness hath its name from Him.

LUCIFER

Beautifully spoken.

Yet beauty hath oft concealed

a question left unanswered.

MICHAEL

Then ask it plainly.

Lucifer smiles.

LUCIFER

Gladly.

What is Man?

MICHAEL

The workmanship of God.

LUCIFER

As are we.

MICHAEL

As are we.

LUCIFER

Yet Man was fashioned of dust.

MICHAEL

And therefore?

LUCIFER

Therefore nothing.

I marvel only.

We were sons of the morning

when Adam was yet earth beneath our feet.

We beheld the heavens stretched forth.

We sang when the foundations were laid.

We have borne His commandments,

kept His courts,

and stood before His glory.

Yet unto the creature of yesterday He saith—

"Let us make man in our image,

after our likeness."

Lucifer leaneth forward.

LUCIFER

Where is thine image, Michael?

MICHAEL

I require none.

LUCIFER

Require? Nay.

But desire?

MICHAEL

Neither.

LUCIFER

Thou hast never wondered why?

MICHAEL

I have wondered at many works of God.

Wonder needeth not become accusation.

A few Angels murmur approvingly.

Lucifer's eyes sharpen.

LUCIFER

Accusation?

Michael—

we debate.

MICHAEL

Then debate.

But hide not a dagger beneath the word question.

The chamber grows quiet.

Lucifer smiles.

LUCIFER

Very well.

Let us draw the dagger.

Why should Man bear the likeness of God

whilst Heaven beareth His commands?

MICHAEL

Why should the stars complain

because the earth beareth trees?

LUCIFER

Stars are not commanded to serve trees.

MICHAEL

Nor hath a command made me lesser.

LUCIFER

Hath it not?

When the King saith, "Go"—

thou goest.

MICHAEL

Gladly.

LUCIFER

"Come"—

thou comest.

MICHAEL

Gladly.

LUCIFER

"Bow"—

thou bowest.

MICHAEL

Before Him?

Gladly.

LUCIFER

Always glad.

How convenient.

Perhaps a slave unto thee?

MICHAEL

Wouldst thou have me ashamed

that I love my King?

LUCIFER

I would have thee consider

whether love hath blinded thee.

MICHAEL

And I would have thee consider

whether pride hath opened thine eyes

unto things which are not there.

The Angels stir.

Lucifer's smile weakens.

LUCIFER

Take care, Michael.

MICHAEL

We debate, my lord.

A few Angels exchange glances.

Lucifer sitteth farther back upon the Throne.

LUCIFER

Then answer this.

If tomorrow the King command thee

to descend unto Adam—

to guard him,

to minister unto him,

yea, even to bow thyself before him—

wouldst thou obey?

MICHAEL

If my King command it.

LUCIFER

There.

MICHAEL

There what?

LUCIFER

Thou hast served before the Throne

since before that creature breathed.

Thou art stronger than he.

Older than he.

Thou hast looked upon wonders

his mortal eyes could scarce endure.

Yet if God exalt the dust above thee,

thou wilt kneel and call it righteousness.

MICHAEL

I would.

LUCIFER

Why?

MICHAEL

Because his exaltation stealeth nothing from me.

Lucifer pauses.

MICHAEL

If the King crown another,

my head is not thereby made naked.

If He loveth Man,

I am not therefore unloved.

If He giveth Adam honour,

my honour hath not departed.

Why should another's blessing

become my wound?

The chamber stills.

Lucifer looks upon Michael.

LUCIFER

Because there is order.

MICHAEL

Indeed.

LUCIFER

And the greater should not bow unto the lesser.

MICHAEL

Then thou hast already judged thyself greater.

A silence.

LUCIFER

Canst thou deny it?

MICHAEL

I need not determine my greatness

before I determine whether I shall obey.

LUCIFER

There again.

Obey.

Obey.

Obey.

Thou makest a hymn of the word.

MICHAEL

And thou makest a prison of it.

LUCIFER

Perhaps because I have begun to see the bars.

MICHAEL

Or perhaps because thou hast begun

to desire the Throne.

Silence.

Lucifer's fingers tighten upon the arms of Yehoshua's Seat.

Michael notices.

LUCIFER

Mind thy tongue.

MICHAEL

Thou commandedst me to debate.

Lucifer rises slightly.

LUCIFER

Then debate this—

What callest thou a creature

who possesseth strength,

wisdom,

will,

and glory—

yet hath no right to refuse his Master?

MICHAEL

I call him faithful

if he refuseth not because he loveth Him.

LUCIFER

And if he may not refuse?

MICHAEL

We may.

Lucifer stops.

MICHAEL

Else thou couldst not sit where thou sittest now.

The Court falleth utterly silent.

Lucifer's face hardens.

Michael looks directly upon him.

MICHAEL

Thou speakest as though Heaven were a cage,

whilst proving by thine own rebellion

that the door standeth open.

LUCIFER

And what awaiteth him who walketh through it?

MICHAEL

That dependeth upon where he chooseth to go.

LUCIFER

Judgment.

MICHAEL

If he chooseth wickedness.

LUCIFER

Ah!

Then we are free—

provided we choose what He desireth.

MICHAEL

Nay.

We are free to leap from the heights also.

Yet Heaven is not cruel

because the fall breaketh thee.

A murmur passeth through the Angels.

Lucifer slowly descendeth one step from the Throne.

LUCIFER

Then thou wouldst have us servants forever.

MICHAEL

I would have us sons who remember our Father.

LUCIFER

And Man?

MICHAEL

Our brother, if God calleth him so.

LUCIFER

Though he be dust?

MICHAEL

Especially then.

LUCIFER

Though God raise him above thee?

MICHAEL

Then I shall rejoice beneath him.

LUCIFER

And kneel?

MICHAEL

If righteousness require it.

Lucifer laughs softly.

LUCIFER

Then thou art content to be a slave.

Michael's expression changes.

MICHAEL

Nay, Lucifer.

I know the difference between a servant

and a slave.

LUCIFER

Enlighten us.

MICHAEL

A slave obeyeth because his master possesseth him.

A servant of God obeyeth

because he hath first given himself.

Lucifer says nothing.

MICHAEL

Thou callest surrender chains

because thou canst no longer imagine

loving anything above thyself.

The smile departeth wholly from Lucifer's face.

The students cease whispering.

This is no longer a lesson.

Michael standeth in the Judgment Circle.

Lucifer sitteth upon the Throne.

And between them

something ancient hath begun to break.

Lucifer hath hardeneth.

He had sought to overcome Michael by wisdom,

and could not.

For Michael was no fool.

His understanding was great,

and the love of the Spirit guided his judgment.

Lucifer could not easily move him.

And He knew it.

His fingers tightened.

He then thought to make falsehood beautiful.

He would give envy a melody,

resentment a rhythm,

and clothe accusation in poetry.

Not that Michael might be convinced—

but enchanted.

Lucifer descendeth one step.

His voice changeth.

No longer the voice of a professor.

It became gentle.

Melodic.

Almost pleasant to hear.

LUCIFER

Very well.

Let us debate.

He descendeth one step.

And walks around

LUCIFER

We sang when first the heavens burned,

yet unto dust His favour turned.

LUCIFER

We kept His gates through ancient night,

yet Man is crowned with Heaven's delight.

The Angels become still.

Lucifer's voice gathers strength.

LUCIFER

We bear His sword.

We sound His call.

We rise when bidden.

We kneel. We fall.

LUCIFER

And this ye name the highest good?

To bow because another would?

To call the chain a golden thing

because it cometh from a King?

Whispers move throughout the Circle.

MICHAEL

Lucifer—

LUCIFER

Nay.

Thou desiredst the question plain.

Then let us strip it of its name.

LUCIFER

If power alone declareth right,

then darkness may be named the light.

If every deed of Heaven be good

merely because the Sovereign would—

then tell me, sons of Heaven above:

Is righteousness the child of love?

Or have we merely called it so

because we dare not answer—

No?

The last word echoeth throughout the Council House.

Michael's face hardens.

MICHAEL

Thou Better Take heed.

Lucifer smiles.

LUCIFER

Of what?

MICHAEL

Of Him concerning whom thou speakest.

Have you no fear of the Living GOD?

LUCIFER

Ah.

There standeth thy argument again.

Fear.

MICHAEL

Reverence.

LUCIFER

Fear adorned with a prettier name.

MICHAEL

Thou knowest it is not.

LUCIFER

Do I?

Lucifer turneth unto the students.

LUCIFER

We call Him good because He reigneth.

We call Him just because He judgeth.

We call Him loving because He giveth.

And when He taketh—

we call that loving also.

When He raiseth—

we praise His wisdom.

When He casteth down—

we praise it still.

Lucifer turns slowly toward Michael.

LUCIFER

What deed remaineth, then,

whereby the King might ever be called wrong?

MICHAEL

None.

LUCIFER

Because He cannot do wrong?

MICHAEL

Because wickedness is not in Him.

LUCIFER

Or because none beneath Him

dareth name it when he seeth it?

Michael steps forward.

MICHAEL

Enough!

Lucifer's eyes burn.

He ascendeth again toward the Throne.

LUCIFER

Perhaps we have mistaken might for light.

Perhaps we kneel because we fear His height.

Perhaps the songs which fill this holy hall

are but the praises servants sing who crawl.

MICHAEL

Lucifer...

But Michael's voice hath changed.

His breath groweth heavy.

Heat gathereth throughout his body.

His face burneth red.

And tears begin to gather in his eyes.

For something terrible had happened.

Lucifer hath ***sounded*** *believable.*

Only for a moment.

Only as a whisper.

Yet Michael had heard it.

Darkness slipped into his throat like smoke.

What if—

Michael crushed the thought before it could finish.

Nay.

NAY.

He knew his King.

He had stood before Him.

He had beheld His works.

He had known His goodness.

Yet Lucifer had woven falsehood so cunningly about the truth

that Michael could scarcely find where one ended

and the other began.

His mind sought an answer.

His tongue found none.

And therefore Michael chose anger.

Lucifer reaches the Throne.

He turns.

He beholdeth Michael below—

red with wrath,

eyes wet with tears,

his fists trembling at his sides.

Lucifer understands.

And smiles.

LUCIFER

Ahhh.

He sitteth upon the Throne.

LUCIFER

So thou hast lost the debate?

Michael stares upward.

LUCIFER

Why the angry face, Michael?

Lucifer leaneth forward.

LUCIFER

Where hath all thy wisdom gone?

No answer?

No righteous saying?

No pretty defence of the King?

Michael's hand trembleth.

LUCIFER

Come now.

We are only pretending.

MICHAEL

YOU COWARD!

Michael's wings burst open.

The Judgment Circle trembleth beneath him.

Scrolls scatter.

Angels flee from the midst.

And Michael riseth like fire—

His Anger Burned against Lucifer

He lunged straight toward the Throne.

His training sword raised above his head.

Ready to Strike his Head

To Kill

Lucifer does not flee.

He watches Michael coming, and waits

And smiles.

Waiting for him to Strike

As so He can look righteous before the court

Lucifer's head lay beneath the blade.

Then—

The great doors of the DIVINE COUNCIL HOUSE flew open.

A mighty wind passed through the Court.

The foundations trembled.

Every flame bowed.

Every Angel froze.

And from the doorway came a Voice.

SILENCE

The word struck the Court like thunder.

Michael stopped.

His blade hung in the air—

but a breath from Lucifer's head.

The wrath within him vanished beneath a greater fear.

His wings stiffened.

His sword trembled.

Lucifer's smile disappeared.

Slowly,

very slowly,

every eye turned toward the doors.

YEHOSHUA stood there.

GABRIEL beside Him.

And behind them stood the members of the DIVINE COUNCIL.

VII

A GREAT DIVIDE struck the Court.

Those who had murmured at Lucifer's words drew themselves apart.

Others fled from beside them.

Friend stood against friend.

Brother against brother.

And through the midst of them

GABRIEL came forth.

His grief was gone from his countenance.

Now there remained only the terrible gravity of his office.

GABRIEL

LUCIFER!

The name thundered beneath the dome.

Lucifer turned.

Gabriel pointed toward the Throne.

GABRIEL

Thou hast profaned the Seat of the MOST HIGH.

Thou hast entered the place forbidden unto every mortal beneath the King.

Thou hast taken the honour of thy King unto thyself.

And before the sons of Heaven

thou hast lifted thy tongue against the righteousness of the LORD.

Lucifer's face became still.

GABRIEL

I warned thee in my heart.

I mourned for thee.

I would that what mine eyes beheld

had never been.

But thou hast chosen.

Gabriel's voice trembles.

Then strengthens.

GABRIEL

Lucifer.

Thou hast committed the highest trespass known among the Host.

Thy covering shall not hide thee.

Thy wisdom shall not excuse thee.

Thy beauty shall not deliver thee.

Gabriel raises his voice.

THEREFORE

THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD:

THOU SHALT BE BANISHED

FROM THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

FOR ALL ETERNITY

Silence.

Lucifer stares at Gabriel.

Then around him.

At Michael.

At the students.

At the Council.

And finally—

at Yehoshua.

Something in Lucifer's face breaketh.

Not repentance.

Pride.

And throughout the Court,

the Great Divide widened.

Lucifer looketh upon GABRIEL.

Then his eyes turn unto YEHOSHUA.

The LORD beholdeth him with sorrow.

And immediately Lucifer's countenance burneth.

His nostrils flare.

His fists close.

Wrath riseth within him like a furnace.

Hatred burned in his lungs

Against the God who made him

LUCIFER

OH, SAVE THY PITY, O GOD!

The Court recoileth.

LUCIFER

For it was THOU

that gavest Adam a throne over us!

Thou hast preferred

DUST OVER OUR GLORY!

A mere mortal—

CROWNED!

A thing drawn forth from the ground

and clothed in Thy likeness,

whilst the sons of Heaven stand beneath him!

Lucifer pointeth toward the earth.

LUCIFER

Look upon him!

Flesh upon bone.

Breath within clay.

His feet chained unto the soil from whence he came.

Yet Thou callest him Thine image!

Lucifer strikes his breast.

LUCIFER

And what of us?

We sang when his mountains had no name!

We beheld the heavens kindled!

We stood amongst Thy fires

when Adam was yet sleeping in the dust!

Yet Thou hast set—

A TREE OVER THE STARS!

The words echo beneath the dome.

Michael stares at him.

Gabriel's face falleth.

Lucifer trembleth with rage.

LUCIFER

And now Thou lookest upon me

as though I am the one to be mourned?

As though I have fallen?

As though I should crawl unto Thy feet

and beg forgiveness for beholding the insult plainly?

Lucifer shakes his head.

LUCIFER

Nay.

Keep Thy pity.

Give it unto Adam.

Give him Thy earth.

Give him Thy crown.

Give him Thy likeness.

Give him every honour Heaven apparently lacked.

But look not upon me

as though I should be ashamed

for refusing to call dust

Lord.

ENOUGH!!!

I WILL NOT BOW

I WILL DECIDE WHAT IS GOOD AND EVIL

I WILL DECIDE WHAT IS RIGHT BY MY OWN EYES

His wings spread violently.

The air about him trembleth.

LUCIFER

AND INDEED—

I WILL RISE!

His voice cracks.

For one moment he looketh upon YEHOSHUA.

Upon the King whom he had served.

Upon the One before whom he had once rejoiced.

Then Lucifer shaketh his head.

LUCIFER

NO, O GOD—NO!

His hands strike against his breast.

LUCIFER

FOR I DO NOT NEED THEE!

LUCIFER

I DO NOT NEEEEED THEE!

Lucifer standeth breathing heavily.

And before the eyes of the Host,

his beauty beginneth to change.

The lips which once spoke with majesty

twist beneath wrath.

The countenance once adorned with wisdom

hardens beneath envy.

The light which clothed him flickereth.

And through that ancient splendour

there appeareth another colour.

Darkness.

At first but a vein.

Then another.

Blackness pierceth through his light

as ink through living fire.

His eyes narrow.

The dagger-shaped pupils burn within them.

His glory hath not altogether departed—

which maketh the sight more terrible.

For darkness and splendour now dwell together within him.

Beauty corrupted.

Wisdom poisoned.

Glory turned inward upon itself.

Darkness pierceth through Lucifer's light.

Gabriel beholdeth him.

His sorrow turneth unto command.

GABRIEL

SEIZE HIM!

At once the DIVINE COUNCIL riseth.

They stand like giants.

Watchers.

Mighty ones of the Host.

They lay hold upon him.

One seizeth his right arm.

Another his left.

Others take hold of his wings.

LUCIFER

UNHAND ME!

Lucifer thrashes violently.

His wings beat against their hands.

movement scatter through the Court.

He twists.

Kicks.

Screams

The majesty which once adorned his movements hath departed.

He fighteth beneath their grasp,

like a wild beast caught in chains.

LUCIFER

UNHAND ME!

I AM LUCIFER!

I AM THE CHIEF DUKE OF HEAVEN!

GABRIEL

Thou wast.

Lucifer turns upon him.

Rage consumeth his face.

Then the doors of the Council House burst open.

The HOST had heard the commotion.

Angels pour into the galleries.

Soldiers descend from the courts.

Messengers gather beneath the dome.

Teachers.

Students.

Princes.

Legions.

All of Heaven hath come forth toward the Council.

For word had spread among them.

Lucifer was being cast out.

And every Angel knew what this meant.

A Great Divide had begun.

The Council dragged Lucifer toward the outer height.

Still he fighteth them.

Still he curseth.

Still he calleth unto those who watch.

LUCIFER

LOOK UPON ME!

The Host becomes still.

LUCIFER

WILL YE SUFFER THIS ALSO?

WILL YE BOW FOREVER?

MICHAEL

Hear him not!

But amongst the students—

some do.

One Angel looks upon another.

The same Angels who had laughed during Lucifer's lesson.

The same who had whispered when he spoke of chains.

The same who had wondered silently

whether obedience were slavery.

Their faces change.

One steppeth away from Michael.

Then another.

Michael sees them.

MICHAEL

Brethren...

Another followeth.

Then another.

And suddenly—

the class divideth.

MICHAEL

STOP!

Too late.

Those who had secretly agreed with Lucifer break from among their brethren.

Across the galleries the same thing beginneth.

Angels separate from Angels.

Friends from friends.

Legion from legion.

The Court erupts.

Some cry unto the King.

Some cry unto Lucifer.

Some stand frozen between them.

And the DIVINE COUNCIL bring Lucifer unto the edge.

Beyond it lay the terrible deep.

Lucifer looks back.

His corrupted wings spread.

His eyes burn like fire.

The Council casteth him forth.

Lucifer falleth.

Down.

Away from the courts of Heaven.

And after him—

one Angel leapeth.

Then another.

Then ten.

Then multitudes.

Michael runs toward the edge.

MICHAEL

BRETHREN!

But they have chosen.

Gabriel grabs the hand of Michael

Holds him from beneath the edge

As they fall,

their heavenly splendour beginneth to shed from them.

White glory tears away like burning garments.

Light departeth from their wings.

Their brightness darkeneth.

Gold becometh ash.

White becometh black.

And the farther they descend,

the less they resemble the Host from which they came.

At their head falleth Lucifer.

His darkness spreadeth through his ancient glory

until the morning star itself

seemeth swallowed by night.

Michael standeth upon the height.

His students fall before his eyes.

His brethren.

His fellow servants.

Those beside whom he had learned,

rejoiced,

and worshipped.

Now descending after their teacher.

Gabriel cometh beside Michael.

Neither speaketh.

Below them,

Lucifer and his followers continue their terrible descent.

And Heaven—

which that morning had been one Host—

was one no longer.

Down

Down

Down

Far beneath the courts of Heaven.

Below the stars beneath the sun

Lucifer falleth.

The songs of the Host grow faint.

The light of the Kingdom withdraweth above him.

Until at last—

he striketh the earth.

A great cloud of dust riseth.

Silence.

For a little while, nothing moveth.

Then from within the dust

a hand presseth against the ground.

Lucifer riseth.

Slowly.

His wings hang torn behind him.

Their ancient brightness is gone.

Darkness runneth through every feather.

His breath cometh like fire.

His face—once fair among the sons of Heaven—

is twisted with wrath.

Lucifer looks upward.

Far above him

the heavens remain.

He trembleth.

Then roareth.

Not with sorrow.

Not with repentance.

But with a rage terrible to behold.

LUCIFER

He spitteth the name.

LUCIFER

The name He gave me.

Light-bearer.

Morning star.

Lucifer laughs bitterly.

LUCIFER

Nay.

I shall determine mine own way,

then I shall determine mine own name.

He rises to his full height.

His ruined wings spread behind him.

LUCIFER

No longer Lucifer.

A pause.

SATAN

The Adversary.

The name passeth from his lips

like the shutting of a door.

The fallen angels gather behind him.

None speak.

Then—

a sound.

Laughter.

Not theirs.

Distant.

Gentle.

Human.

Satan becomes still.

His head slowly turneth.

Beyond the wilderness

there lieth a Garden.

Eden

Green.

Living.

Untouched.

So Gentle

And there, beneath the trees,

walk ADAM and EVE.

Innocent

Like children playing within a pond

He beholdeth Adam.

Then he beholdeth Eve.

His rage quieteth.

Something colder taketh its place.

His eyes narrow.

And slowly—

very slowly—

he grins.

A very terrible grin.

And after these things,

silence returned unto Heaven.

Yet it was not the silence which had been before.

For once the Hosts had been one.

Once their songs had risen together.

Once Lucifer had stood among his brethren,

bright among the sons of the morning.

But now—

there was an empty place.

The rebellion had ended.

The Adversary had been cast down.

And Heaven mourned.

YEHOSHUA stood before the heights of the Kingdom.

Beyond Him stretched the heavens,

peaceful once more.

His left hand stood ***GABRIEL.***

The Chief Herald said nothing.

His hands were folded before him,

and his eyes were lowered.

At His right hand stood ***MICHAEL.***

His sword was sheathed.

No triumph rested upon his face.

Michael remembered.

He remembered the morning stars.

Lucifer laughing beside them.

A long while passed.

Then Michael spoke.

MICHAEL

I tried, O Lord.

I tried.

Thou hast become a slave unto thyself.

Therefore

I shall look upon thee no further…..